



HARRY MITCHELL

Representing Arizona's 5th district



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Dear Friends

The level of spending and amount of debt that has accumulated in Washington in recent years under both parties is of great concern to me, and I am committed to working to make Washington more fiscally responsible.

I've [led the fight to block automatic pay raises](#) for members of Congress, and for the past two years, I've [donated my pay raises to charity](#). I've voted against unbalanced budgets, and called for greater accountability for taxpayers. I voted against \$350 billion in funding for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), and voted for legislation to require the Treasury Department to require banks to provide quarterly reports of how each and every tax dollar is being used. I've voted against the auto bailout, and cosponsored legislation to create a bipartisan commission, like the 9/11 Commission, to examine ways to reduce our national debt.

More recently, I [voted against the FY2010 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act](#) because it included a 6% increase for Congressional Operations. I believe that fiscal responsibility begins at home, and spending more on Congress sends the wrong message. If we expect other parts of the federal government to control spending, we have to start with ourselves.

That's why last week I [wrote a letter to the Speaker of the House](#) asking her to strip \$132 million in funding for two luxury Gulfstream 550 jets that could potentially be used for travel by Members of Congress. The funding had been included as part of the FY2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Bill, which primarily funds American troops during a time of war, which passed in July by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 400-30.

I have long advocated against increases in spending for members of Congress, as well as major reforms to the earmark process to prevent abuses. I was particularly concerned about allegations in recent press reports that a substantial portion of this funding may have been requested via an earmark request for a for-profit company which [wasn't outlined in the bill](#). I made sure to make my concerns known to the Speaker.

I am pleased to report that House Leadership has now reconsidered, and will be canceling funding for these planes. On August 11, 2009, House Leadership announced that it would remove \$550 million in funding for passenger planes [for use by senior government officials](#).

I believe that being a good steward of taxpayer funds is one of my most important responsibilities in Congress. As we continue to debate important issues in the House, please be assured that I will continue working for you as an advocate of responsible spending in Washington.

Sincerely,



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If you wish to contact me, please do so at <http://mitchell.house.gov>. Please **do NOT** reply to this message.
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